

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00881 100923Z

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ACTION H-03

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, KS, OREP (RYAN)

SUBJECT: LOCAL PRESS COVERS CONGRESSMAN RYAN'S HUMAN
RIGHTS/U.S. ASSISTANCE REPORT

REF: STATE 7376

1. SUMMARY: PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE COVERAGE TO
CONGRESSMAN RYAN'S REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND U.S.
ASSISTANCE IN VIETNAM AND KOREA (REF.). MOST PAPERS
EMPHASIZED RYAN CONTENTION THAT "SERIOUS ABRIDGEMENT
OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS" CONTINUES IN SOUTH KOREA. COVERAGE"
OF REST OF REPORT VARIED FROM PAPER TO PAPER. END SUMMARY.

2. BOTH TONGA ILBO AND CHOSUN ILBO GAVE EQUALLY PROMINENT
COVERAGE TO CONGRESSMAN RYAN'S HFAC REPORT WHICH HANKUK
ILBO ALSO FEATURED. ALL THREE NEWSPAPERS NOTED THAT
"REPRESSION" REMAINED POWERFUL ISSUE IN KOREAN POLITICS.
OFFICIAL SEOUL SINMUN, HOWEVER REPORTED THAT RYAN HAD
SAID REPORTS OF REPRESSION IN SOUTH KOREA WERE EXAGGERATED.

3. ONLY TONGA REPORTED RYAN'S COMMENTS THAT:

A. ROKG HAD PRESSURED TONGA'S ADVERTISERS TO WITHDRAW
ADVERTISING COPY FROM NEWSPAPER (WHICH HAS SUBSEQUENTLY
BACKFIRED TO SOME EXTENT) AND

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B. IN ABSENCE OF ACTIVE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT (AND DESPITE

LABOR LAWS), PRIVATE ENTERPRISE HAD GAINED BENEFITS FROM KOREAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT EXPENSE OF KOREAN LABOR FORCE.

4. TONGA ILBO ON THE OTHER HAND DID NOT REPORT PORTIONS OF STUDY WHICH NOTED THAT OPPOSITION ELEMENTS IN KOREA WOULD STOP ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITY IN FACE OF INVASION THREAT FROM NORTH. TONGA ALSO DID NOT REPORT STATEMENT THAT OPPOSITION WAS NOT IN FAVOR OF SUSPENSION OF U.S. MILITARY AID TO KOREA EVEN AS LEVERAGE AGAINST PRESIDENT PARK AND HIS "REPRESSIVE" HUMAN RIGHTS POLICIES.

5. HANKUK ILBO NOTED RYAN HAD NOT SEEN BISHOP CHI AS HE HAD DESIRED AND THAT PRESENCE OF US/ROK FORCES IN KOREA MADE "POSSIBILITY OF INVASION BY NORTH NEAR ZERO".

RIDER

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